AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A rare-earth oxide thermal spray coated article comprising:

a substrate and

a coating layer formed by thermally spraying a rare-earth oxide thermal spraying powder onto a surface of the substrate,

said coating layer being of a gray or black color having, in the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space, an L^* value of up to 50, an a^* value of -3.0 to +3.0, and a b^* value of -3.0 to +3.0.

2. (original) The article of claim 1 wherein the coating layer contains carbon, titanium or molybdenum.

3. (currently amended) A rare-earth oxide thermal spray coated article comprising:

a substrate and

a coating layer formed by thermally spraying a rare-earth oxide thermal spraying powder onto a surface of the substrate,

said coating layer being of a gray or black color having, in the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space, an L^* value of up to 50, an a^* value of -3.0 to +3.0, and a b^* value of -3.0 to +3.0

~~The article of claim 1~~ wherein the coating layer has a carbon content of 0.1 to 2% by weight or a titanium or molybdenum content of 1 to 1000 ppm.

4. (original) A rare-earth oxide powder for thermal spraying, which powder is of a gray or black color having, in the $L^*a^*b^*$ color space, an L^* value of up to 50, an a^* value of -3.0 to +3.0 and a b^* value of -3.0 to +3.0.

5. (new) The rare-earth oxide powder of claim 4, wherein the powder contains carbon, titanium or molybdenum.

6. (new) The rare-earth oxide powder of claim 4, wherein the powder has a carbon content of 0.1 to 2% by weight or a titanium or molybdenum content of 1 to 1000 ppm.